IDW

1

COVER A

SONIC™

THE HEDGEHOG

IMPOSTER SYNDROME

ISSUE 50 IS COMING!

SEGA®

SONIC™ THE HEDGEHOG

IMPOSTER SYNDROME

STORY **IAN FLYNN**

ART **THOMAS ROTHLISBERGER**

AARON HAMMERSTROM (PAGES 8-12)

INKS **MATT FROESE** (PAGES 8-12)

COLORS **VALENTINA PINTO**

LETTERS **SHAWN LEE**

ASSISTANT EDITOR **RILEY FARMER**

EDITOR **DAVID MARIOTTE**

30th ANNIVERSARY

Special thanks to Mai Kiyotaki, Michael Cisneros, Sandra Jo, Sonic Team, and everyone at Sega for their invaluable assistance.

For international rights, contact **licensing@idwpublishing.com**

IDW®

www.IDWPUBLISHING.com

Nachie Marsham, Publisher • **Blake Kobashigawa**, VP of Sales • **Tara McCrillis**, VP Publishing Operations • **John Barber**, Editor-in-Chief • **Mark Doyle**, Editorial Director, Originals • **Lauren LePera**, Managing Editor • **Joe Hughes**, Director, Talent Relations • **Anna Morrow**, Sr. Marketing Director • **Keith Davidsen**, Director, Marketing & PR • **Topher Alford**, Sr. Digital Marketing Manager • **Shauna Monteforte**, Sr. Director of Manufacturing Operations • **Jamie Miller**, Sr. Operations Manager • **Nathan Widick**, Sr. Art Director, Head of Design • **Neil Uyetake**, Sr. Art Director, Design & Production • **Shawn Lee**, Art Director, Design & Production • **Jack Rivera**, Art Director, Marketing

Ted Adams and **Robbie Robbins**, IDW Founders

SEGA®

Facebook: **facebook.com/idwpublishing** • Twitter: **@idwpublishing**

YouTube: **youtube.com/idwpublishing** • Instagram: **@idwpublishing**

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG: IMPOSTER SYNDROME #1. NOVEMBER 2021. ©SEGA. All rights reserved. SEGA is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. SEGA and SONIC THE HEDGEHOG are either registered trademarks or trademarks of SEGA CORPORATION. © 2021 Idea and Design Works, LLC. All Rights Reserved. IDW Publishing, a division of Idea and Design Works, LLC. Editorial offices: 2765 Truxtun Road, San Diego, CA 92106. The IDW logo is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Any similarities to persons living or dead are purely coincidental. With the exception of artwork used for review purposes, none of the contents of this publication may be reprinted without the permission of Idea and Design Works, LLC. IDW Publishing does not read or accept unsolicited submissions of ideas, stories, or artwork.

FILE: 1M9-SYM-001

"OPERATION: REMASTER" IS MOVING INTO ITS FINAL TESTING STAGES.

WITH THIS, I WILL FINALLY BE ABLE TO BREAK WHAT I AFFECTIONATELY CALL "THE SONIC CYCLE."

FILE: 1M9-SYM-001

TO WIT: DR. EGGMAN STAGES A BOLD PLAN TO RESHAPE THE WORLD...

FILE: 1M9-SYM-001

...SONIC ARRIVES, SOMETIMES WITH HIS MENAGERIE OF FRIENDS, TO RUIN EVERYTHING...

FILE: 1M9-SYM-001

...UNTIL FINALLY THE DAY IS "SAVED." THE GENERAL POPULACE REBUILDS AND RETURNS TO THEIR REGULAR LIVES.

NO EVOLUTION. NO VISION. NO *FUTURE*.

FILE: 1M9-SYM-001

THANKFULLY, *I'M HERE*. STEP ONE OF "OPERATION: REMASTER" WILL BE TO REMOVE DR. EGGMAN FROM PLAY.

HE IS A REVOLUTIONARY, A VISIONARY, AND GROOMS A FINE MUSTACHE. BUT HE GETS TUNNEL-VISION WHEN IT COMES TO SONIC.

I HAVE STUDIED UNDER THE MASTER, SEEN HIS FEW SHORT-COMINGS, AND PERFECTED HIS TECHNIQUE.

HE'LL THANK ME IN THE END. I'M SURE OF IT.

FILE: 1M9-SYM-001

STEP TWO: REPLACE THE SO-CALLED "HEROES" WHO STAND IN THE WAY OF PROGRESS.

THE GENERAL POPULACE RELIES ON THEM FAR TOO MUCH, BUT IT'S FAR SIMPLER TO REPLACE A FEW CELEBRITIES THAN CHANGE SOCIETY.

BY CONTROLLING THE "HERO-VERSUS-VILLAIN" DYNAMIC, I WILL BE ABLE TO SHAPE THE WORLD AND ITS PEOPLE WITH THE VERY THEATRICS THEY'VE BECOME SO ACCUSTOMED TO.

FILE: 1M9-SYM-001

IT'S BEEN AN ARDUOUS JOURNEY TO GATHER AND ASSEMBLE ALL THE NECESSARY COMPONENTS TO MAKE THIS PLAN WORK.

BUT NOW, AT LONG LAST... *THEY'RE READY!*

"SONIC IS UNDENIABLY THE HERO OF THE WORLD. BUT BUILDING A BETTER METAL SONIC WON'T SUFFICE.

"SONIC IS MORE THAN JUST RAW POWER. HE'S ABOUT STYLE--*ATTITUDE*.

"I NEED THAT INDOMITABLE SPIRIT, THAT ROGUISH CHARM. HOWEVER, SINCE IT IS A LIABILITY AS MUCH AS IT'S A BOON...

"...*SURGE* WILL REPLACE HIM, AND I WILL KEEP THE BRAVADO ON A LEASH."

YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD TOUCH *ME*? *PATHETIC!*

"AS PREVIOUSLY NOTED, THERE ARE 'DESIGN FLAWS' INHERENT IN SONIC."

SPLISH

SPLISH

CHEAP SHOT FOR A CHEAP BOT!

"SURGE NEEDS A SUPPORT UNIT TO MAKE UP FOR HER SHORT-COMINGS. AN ANALYTICAL BALANCE TO THE BRASHNESS; SOMEONE TO LOOK BEFORE SHE LEAPS."

NICE ASSIST, KID. DON'T LET IT GO TO YOUR HEAD.

SHUNK

"THUS *KITSUNAMI* WAS MODELED AFTER SONIC'S MOST BENEFICIAL ALLY: TAILS."

Y-YES, MA'AM. THANK YOU, MA'AM.

W-WE HAVE LESS THAN A MINUTE TO COMPLETE THE COURSE...

PFFT. ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD.

BOOM

SLAM

AAAND DONE!

IN RECORD TIME, TOO! C'MON, DOC. YOU CAN BE IMPRESSED.

YOU LEFT KITSUNAMI BEHIND.

I'M SORRY! I HAD TO RECHARGE MY PACK!

KIT GOT HERE EVENTUALLY. THE IMPORTANT ONE MADE IT IN RECORD TIME.

TEST? PASSED! ME? AWESOME! SO LET'S GET ON WITH THE MAIN MISSION ALREADY!

YOU'VE PROVEN PROFICIENCY IN A CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT.

THE NEXT STEP IS TO TEST YOUR SKILLS IN THE FIELD, BUT IN A WAY THAT WON'T--

I'M *REAL* TIRED OF YOU TALKING DOWN TO ME! WE GO *NOW* AND WE GO *HARD!*

GO TO SLEEP.

WHAT DID YOU DO TO HER?!

YOU SAW NOTHING.

A PITY IT ISN'T THIS POTENT AGAINST ANYONE ELSE.

STILL, ONCE AGAIN, IT PAYS TO HAVE BUILT IN A WEAKNESS TO MY HYPNOSIS EFFECT...

UGH... WHAT HAPPENED...?

YOU PUSHED YOUR ENHANCEMENTS TOO FAR AND HAD A BRIEF BLACKOUT. NOW THEN, SHALL WE DISCUSS YOUR FIRST LIVE FIELD TEST?

UH... YEAH. LAY IT ON ME.

FOREST RIDGE CAMPGROUNDS. THAT NIGHT.

"FIRST, IF WE'RE TO REMOVE SONIC FROM PLAY, WE NEED TO WEAKEN HIS SUPPORT BASE.

"NO, SURGE! NO ASSASSINATION!

"A VENGEFUL HERO IS DRIVEN, DEDICATED, AND MORALLY RIGHTEOUS...

"...BUT A HERO SUFFERING FROM A TRAGIC LOSS FROM A HORRIBLE ACCIDENT? THAT ONE'S BROKEN AND MOROSE."

LET'S SEE SONIC SAVE ALL YOU HAPPY CAMPERS FROM THIS.

FALL

CENTRAL CITY. DAYS LATER.

"SECONDLY, WHILE I KNOW HOW POWERFUL YOU ARE, I NEED TO ASSESS YOUR FINESSE

"OUR FIRST REAL MISSION MUST BE CLANDESTINE. SO I WANT YOU TO SOW CHAOS AND NOT GET CAUGHT."

LOOK AT 'EM. ACTING LIKE THEY DON'T HAVE A CARE IN THE WORLD. DIDN'T THE ZOMBOTS TEAR THIS CITY APART NOT TOO LONG AGO?*

THE RESTORATION HELPED THEM REBUILD. I-I-I THINK THEY JUST WANT TO BE... HAPPY...?

*STH#21

SUCKS TO BE THEM, 'CUZ I AIM TO MISBEHAVE.

I CAN USE MY HYDRO-COIL TAILS TO REACH UNDERGROUND, ACCESS AND MANIPULATE THE WIRING, AND THROW THE TRAFFIC LIGHTS AND POWER GRIDS INTO DISARRAY!

UH-HUH. YOU HAVE FUN WITH THAT.

I'MMA GO FAST!

W-WELL... YES... THERE'S THAT, TOO...

BOOM

POP

POP

GAME

A FEW MILES AWAY IN EMERALD TOWN.

OH, DEAR, MR. PROWER. YOU TAKE AFTER DR. EGGMAN IN SOME SURPRISING WAYS...

...WHILE I COVERED MY TRACKS, HE'S ASTUTE ENOUGH TO REALIZE I WAS STUDYING BELLE FOR *SOMETHING*. IF HE REVIEWS HER CODE HIMSELF, HE MAY REALIZE WHAT I'VE DONE TO SURGE AND KITSUNAMI.

FROM THERE, HE COULD DEVELOP SOME KIND OF COUNTER-MEASURE. I NEED TO KNOW WHAT HE KNOWS, AND DESTROY ANY RESEARCH HE HAS...

...HMM... NO IMMEDIATE SECURITY MEASURE. THE DOOR SEEMS TO BE REINFORCED.

VERY REINFORCED!

BLAST IT ALL...

BOOM! ONE SLEEPLESS CITY AND NOT A POLICE SIREN TO BE HEARD!

KITSNUNAMI, SEE IF YOU CAN FEED YOUR HYDRO-COIL UNDER THE DOOR AND UNLOCK IT FROM THE OTHER SIDE.

MMM... NO, SIR. IT'S AIRTIGHT.

UH, HELLO? I PASSED YOUR TEST WITH FLYING COLORS AND TIME TO SPARE?

HOW ABOUT A LITTLE RECOGNITION?

LOOKS LIKE HE LEARNED FROM THE OUTBREAK AND UPGRADED. WELL PLAYED, BOY.

PSHT. FINE. IF YOU WANT IN THERE SO BAD, I'LL KNOCK A WALL IN.

NO! THE ENTIRE POINT OF THIS EXERCISE WAS STEALTH!

OUR TIME LIMIT IS UP. RETURN TO BASE EVERYONE.

STARLINE BASE SIGMA. LATER.

CAREER CRIMINALS ASSAULT CENTRAL CITY

HEROES SAVE CAMPERS FROM **WILDFIRE**

WE FAILED...

HEY! WE DIDN'T GET CAUGHT! THAT WAS THE *POINT!*

I WANTED TO DEAL WITH SONIC'S GAL PALS DIRECTLY. ***SOMEBODY*** WANTED TO TRUST A WALL OF STUPID FLAME.

A CLOSE CALL FOR THEM ISN'T ANY BETTER OR WORSE THAN DR. EGGMAN'S TRACK RECORD.

WHATEVER. WE DID GOOD, RIGHT?

YOU DID *"WELL."* AND SO NOW IT'S FINALLY TIME...

AW, YEAH!

...FOR THE FINAL TEST!

OH, COME ON!

YOU GAVE ME THE POWER TO DESTROY SONIC! LET! ME! DESTROY! SONIC!

I GAVE YOU THE POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD, BUT IT WILL ONLY WORK IF YOU FOLLOW MY PLAN.

THE FIRST STEP IS TO SAFELY REMOVE DR. EGGMAN FROM PLAY. WE CAN ONLY DO *THAT* ONCE WE'RE SURE WE CAN STRIP HIM OF HIS SUPPORT.

I'VE SELECTED THIS REMOTE BASE TO TEST OUT MY UPDATED BYPASS ALGORITHM. WE WILL INFILTRATE THE BASE AND--

AND THEN WE GET YOUR SECURITY BLANKET OUT OF ITS SECURE BUNKER SO YOU FEEL SAFE ENOUGH TO DO ANOTHER STUPID TEST AND *BLAH-BLAH-BLAH!*

I-I-I THINK WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL. I DON'T WANT YOU TO GET HURT.

YOU SAYIN' I CAN'T HANDLE MYSELF?

N-NO...!

YOU SAYIN' YOU WON'T DO YOUR JOB AND WATCH MY BACK?

N-N-NO...!

WELL IF YOU AREN'T SAYIN' ANYTHING, *SHUT UP!*

LOOK, I GET YOU BRAINY-TYPES LIKE TO THINK OF ALL THE ANGLES. BUT ME AND THAT FAKER BOY ARE SIMPLE CREATURES.

I HIT HIM FAST, I HIT HIM HARD, AND I KEEP *HITTING* UNTIL HE DOESN'T MOVE ANYMORE.

AND HOW DO YOU PLAN ON FINDING HIM?

I CAN RUN LAPS AROUND THE PLANET UNTIL I FIND HIM!

MMM AND IF HE'S WITH HIS FRIENDS?

THEN I TAKE THEM OUT, TOO!

OH, REALLY? TAILS IS PROVIDING AIR SUPPORT, TANGLE AND WHISPER ARE STRIKING AT RANGE, AMY IS CLOSING IN AND YOU CAN HANDLE SONIC?

I... WELL... *PROBABLY!*

KIT WOULD BE HANDLING ALL THOSE WORTHLESS EXTRAS!

I-I-I'D DO MY B-B-BEST...

POKE

DON'T PATRONIZE ME! I'LL DROWN YOU WITH YOUR OWN TAILS!

EEK

OH, FOR THE LOVE OF... STOP CRINGING! WE CAN'T TAKE OUT SONIC IF YOU'RE ALWAYS DOING THAT!

I-I-I'M S-S-SORRY!

UGH! WHY DO YOU EVEN WANT TO HELP ME?!

I DON'T KNOW!

WHY... DO I WANT TO DO THIS? ANY OF THIS?

I... HAVEN'T EVEN MET SONIC. I DON'T... THINK I HAVE...?

DO YOU WANT TO DESTROY HIM STILL?

I WANT WHATEVER YOU WANT.

YEAH... BUT... WHY? DO YOU?

BUT WHY?!

...I DON'T KNOW...

AAAND REBOOT.

I THOUGHT KEEPING THINGS SIMPLE WOULD MAKE THINGS EASIER.

PERHAPS I SHOULD CRAFT A BIT OF BACKSTORY TO SHORE UP THEIR EMOTIONAL...?

WHAT DID YOU DO TO ME?!

GAH!

SLEEP! SLEEP! SLEEP!

NYO... I... WHAN... ANSHURES...

THUNK

WHEN I USED BELLE'S BASE CODE TO WRITE PERSONALITIES FOR THEM, I EXPECTED A LITTLE MORE STABILITY!

MAYBE THE DIFFERENCE WAS SHE WAS BUILT FROM SCRATCH? OR IS IT A BYPRODUCT OF...?

THIS RESISTANCE TO THE HYPNOTIC CONTROL IS ALSO AN UNWELCOME BUG.

I'VE INVESTED TOO MUCH IN THEM NOW TO START OVER. I'LL JUST HAVE TO HANDLE THEM WITH MORE CARE.

ONCE WE BEGIN TO FULFILL THEIR PRIMARY DIRECTIVES, THEIR PERSONALITIES SHOULD EVEN OUT.

SHOW TIME.

WHA HAPPUN...?

THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE ALL RIGHT! IS ANYTHING BROKEN? ANYTHING FEEL WRONG?

UH... NO?

MOST LIKELY BECAUSE KIT HERE CAUGHT YOU, EVEN THOUGH HE WAS GLITCHING AS WELL.

YOU ALWAYS HAVE MY BACK, DON'T YOU DRIPPY? THANKS.

Y-YOU'RE WELCOME!

UGH... YOU SAID WE GLITCHED?

YES. WE GOT INTO A HEATED ARGUMENT, WHICH OVERLOADED YOUR UPGRADES.

YOU WANTED TO COMPLETE ONE MORE OPTIMIZATION TEST. I WANTED TO PUSH AHEAD INTO THE MAIN MISSION. TEMPERS FLARED AND... WELL, HERE WE ARE.

I'M SORRY. YOU WERE RIGHT. WE'LL GO AHEAD WITH THE FINAL TESTING PHASE IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT.

HUH. THAT SOUND RIGHT TO YOU?

I DO WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE SAFE, MA'AM.

ALL RIGHT THEN. SURE. WE'LL... UH... DO THE TEST. WHAT'S THE PLAN?

THE FIRST STEP IS TO SAFELY REMOVE DR. EGGMAN FROM PLAY. WE CAN ONLY DO *THAT* ONCE WE'RE SURE WE CAN STRIP HIM OF HIS SUPPORT.

I'VE SELECTED THIS REMOTE BASE TO TEST OUT MY UPDATED BYPASS ALGORITHM. WE WILL INFILTRATE THE BASE AND THEN...

NEXT TIME: STRESS TEST!

NEXT MONTH

SONIC LETTERS SQUAD

IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Hello, Imposters! Thank you for joining Ian Flynn, Thomas Rothlisberger, Aaron Hammerstrom, Matt Froese, Valentina Pinto, and Shawn Lee for the very first issue of Imposter Syndrome! *Surge and Kit have been getting lots of love since they were announced, so let's check out your art featuring the devious duo!*

Please don't forget to send your art and letters to letters@idwpublishing.com, and make sure to mark them: "OKAY TO PRINT!" And join the IDW Sonic Comics Squad on Facebook! Next month, a surge of tests leaves the imposters in need of a repair kit!

ART BY KYMANI

PLUSHIES BY
SOMETHINGSONICRELATED

ART BY
JONATHAN

ART BY
LSS

SURGE
THE TENREC
ART BY
KYLE
Kyle Ammon
© '21

ART MAURO FONSECA COLORS JOANA LAFUENTE

ART THOMAS ROTHLISBERGER COLORS VALENTINA PINTO

ART EVAN STANLEY

ON YOUR MARKS. GET SET. GO!

IAN FLYNN • TRACY YARDLEY
EVAN STANLEY • ADAM BRYCE THOMAS
JENNIFER HERNANDEZ

Oversized hardcover editions of IDW's celebrated SONIC THE HEDGEHOG comic books, including the ongoing series, annuals, and mini-series, all presented in recommended reading order.

EVERYTHING A BEGINNER COULD NEED, EVERYTHING A DIEHARD COULD WANT!

Volume One collects the first 12 issues
(*Fallout*, *The Fate of Dr. Eggman*, and *Battle for Angel Island*)

IDW @IDWPUBLISHING
IDWPUBLISHING.COM

©SEGA

**FULL-THROTTLE TALES TO CELEBRATE THE BLUE BLUR'S BIG YEAR!
NOW WITH EXPANDED STORY CONTENT, INTERVIEWS,
A COVER GALLERY, AND MORE!**

FEATURING FAN FAVORITES
**IAN FLYNN • AARON HAMMERSTROM • REGGIE GRAHAM
MAURO FONSECA • THOMAS ROTHLISBERGER**

AND WELCOMING *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHORS
GALE GALLIGAN (*THE BABYSITTERS CLUB*)
AND **THE MCELROY BROTHERS** (*THE ADVENTURE ZONE*)!

IDW @IDWPUBLISHING
IDWPUBLISHING.COM

©SEGA